

Meritor Automotive, Inc.  
2135 West Maple Road  
Troy, MI 48068-2180

RECEIVED

00 MAR 29 PM 12:56

OFFICE  
DEFECTS INVESTIGATION



**MERITOR**

March, 2000

00V-093 (01)

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
400 Seventh Street S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Attention: Associate Administrator for Enforcement

Re: Defect Information Report 49 CFR 573.5:

**RHP-11 Suspensions Assembled from November 1999 - January 2000**  
**With Incorrect Brake Camshafts**

NHTSA File: Unassigned

Meritor File: Unassigned

Gentlemen:

- (1) This Defect Information Report is submitted by:

Meritor Automotive  
2135 West Maple Road  
Troy, Michigan 48084

in accordance with the requirements of The National Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966 as set forth in 49 CFR Section 573.5 This information is presented to correspond to the sub-paragraphs of Section 573.5(c).

- (2) This report pertains to certain Meritor RHP-11 Trailer Axle Suspensions rated at 36,000 – 50,000 lbs that were assembled by Meritor between November 1999 and January 2000. Representative product literature (SP-96189) is enclosed.

Meritor has determined that a portion of fifty-one (51) RHP-11 suspensions manufactured on December 1, 1999 were assembled with incorrect brake camshafts. Since Meritor is unable to trace these suspensions and identify the specific vehicles into which they were installed, it is necessary to inspect the entire November 1999 through January 2000 production run consisting of 600 suspensions in order to be certain that the brake assemblies installed in the suspect suspensions are inspected and corrected.

- (3) Meritor has determined that a portion of a one-day production run of 51 suspensions Model RHP-11 Trailer Axle Suspensions were assembled with incorrect brake camshafts. The 51 suspect suspensions were purchased as part of a 600-unit suspension production run by Wabash National and installed in trailers subsequently purchased by J B Hunt.
- (4) The number of suspensions built with incorrect camshafts is estimated to be no more than 51.
- (5) Meritor believes that a portion of fifty-one (51) Model RHP-11 suspensions were assembled with the right side camshafts installed in left side brakes and/or left side camshafts installed in right side brakes.

Brakes that have been assembled with incorrect camshafts in this manner will not function. During normal vehicle use, the other brakes in conventional tractor-trailer brake system (ie tractor-trailer systems equipped with 10 brakes) can compensate for a non-functioning brake(s). Under emergency conditions, trailers that have been built with incorrect brake camshafts will have diminished stopping distance performance. Affected trailers will also have reduced parking (hill holding) capability.

- (6) Meritor first became aware of this problem in January 2000 when Meritor received a report that J B Hunt had detected an RHP-11 suspension that had been built with an incorrect brake camshaft. Subsequent inspection of additional vehicles at J B Hunt detected several other suspensions that were also built with incorrect brake camshafts.
- (7) Meritor has also determined that affected vehicles will not comply with the deceleration or parking requirements of FMVSS-121.
- (8) As soon as the issue was detected, Meritor notified the affected vehicle manufacturer (Wabash National) who has requested J B Hunt to inspect the suspect trailer suspensions in order to identify and correct the incorrect brake camshaft condition.

Meritor believes that approximately 90% of the affected vehicles at J B Hunt have been inspected as of February, 2000..

(9) Following is an approximate schedule for this Program:

February 2000	Formally Notify Wabash National
March 2000	Complete the Remaining Inspections & Vehicle Corrections at J B Hunt

Representative notices, bulletins, and communications that relate directly to the defect which are sent to the vehicle manufacturers will be submitted to NHTSA not later than five (5) days after they are initially sent.

We trust that the above information is fully responsive to the requirements of 49 CFR 573.5. Any additions or modifications to any of the information given will be reported promptly to NHTSA. Should there be any questions with respect to the information provided, please contact the undersigned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Meritor Automotive



G. T. Bowman

Manager, Product Integrity